The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives you, each week, official interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the facts, highlights and probable trends, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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VICTORY BUY UNITED STATES WAR SAVINGS BONDS AND STAMPS

Thru Payroll Savings

WHOLE NO. 1791 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1945 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 35, NO. 32

New Wagner Housing Bill Hailed By AFL Leaders

Important Step For Full Employment, Green And Bates Say

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green and Harry C. Bates, chairman of the AFL Housing Committee, hailed the introduction of the Postwar Housing Bill by Senator Robert F. Wagner as "the most important step yet taken in Congress toward the positive assurance of full employment after the war."

In a joint statement they said the bill embodies the major proposals for a postwar housing program offered by the American Federation of Labor a year ago.

The bill is designed to stimulate the construction of 1,250,000 dwelling units a year for the first 10 years. It provides federal subsidies of $132,000,000 a year but it is believed that at the end of the fourth year after the war a total investment of seven billion dollars a year of private and public funds would be generated for the housing program.

The following AFL recommendations were included in the bill which Senator Wagner said he hoped would be passed this year:

1—Federal aid to municipalities for a long-term redevelopment program designed to replan and rebuild decaying cities and towns for sound and stable growth.

2—Resumption and expansion of slum clearance and rehousing program by the local housing authorities, under improved U. S. Housing Act, to provide decent homes to families of low income whom private enterprise cannot reach.

3—Enlargement of market for rental housing, for families of moderate income through FHA insurance of yield on private investment in projects built for moderate rentals.

4—Improvement of housing on the farm and provision of low-cost rural housing to farm families on lease but for eventual ownership.

5—Orderly disposition of permanent war housing, available for low-cost housing authorities to acquire such housing and giving occupancy preference to private enterprise and veterans.

6—Assurance that fair labor standards be maintained on postwar housing construction envisaged in the program.

7—Creation of a permanent statutory National Housing Agency.

The Green-Bates statement declared:

"These are sound, forward-looking proposals, designed to generate a large volume of productive activity and sustain full employment. They place the prime responsibility for postwar housing squarely upon private enterprise and local initiative, with the essential minimum of government aid and guidance. They specifically relate housing policy to employment and investment activity. The Wagner Postwar Housing Bill is the most important step yet taken in Congress toward the positive assurance of full employment after the war.

"Enactment of this bill is especially urged. Labor calls for speedy hearings immediately after the recess and prompt, bipartisan approval of the measure. We call upon every union member, every family and every citizen to make their support of the Wagner Postwar Housing Bill known to their Congressmen."

AFL AIRCRAFT WORKERS TO SEE TOKYO BOMBER

Workers in principal B-29 production plants throughout the country are due to receive a visit from the B-29 "Thumper," a veteran of 20 bomb-blasting trips to Tokyo and her crew of five officers and five enlisted men. The crew, headed by Lt. Col. Robert E. Hopper, 35, of Hermosa Beach, Calif., who piloted "Thumper" on the first B-29 raid over Tokyo, will tell B-29 workers what an outstanding contribution they have made to the progress of the war on Japan.

In all, several hundred thousand union members will see Thumper and crew during the coming month. First stop on the tour will be Seattle, home of Boeing Aircraft, where the B-29 was designed and where thousands of them have been built by AFL members.

WORKERS MAKE UP ALL STRIKE LOSSES

Washington, D. C.—Organized labor lost more days than made up losses in war production due to strikes by persuading the American workers to remain on the job on national holidays, the Labor Department declared.

"Workers in munitions industries alone," the official report said, "by remaining on the job New Year's Day, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July, put in more than five times as many man-days of work as were lost through strikes and lockouts during the free six months of this year.

In June, the report said, strike losses amounted to slightly more than one-fifth of one percent of the 800 million man-days of labor actually worked.

POSTWAR KEY

Washington, D. C.—The sponsor of the Postwar Housing Bill, who has been a life-long, consistent friend of labor, described the broad purposes of the measure in an eloquent speech to the United States Senate, excerpts from which follow:

By ROBERT F. WAGNER
U. S. Senator from New York

I am not a visionary. But since I entered the Senate 18 years ago, I have resisted the defeatist doctrine that established men and women could not look into the future at all. Only the ostrich, with its head buried in the sands, does not look ahead. We have passed experimentally before the years, we know and can find out enough about our economy—its strong points and its weak points—to prepare and plan for an economic future of stability and prosperity instead of misery and chaos.

In this future of stability and prosperity, housing by common agreement must play a central role. In 1925, we built more than 900,000 houses in this country. In 1933, we built less than 100,000. That diminished to zero, day by day, that unemployment in the building trades was sounding the ominous warning of a great depression. And today, distinguished economists like Beardsley Ruml insist that the stabilization of construction at high levels is the foundation of general postwar prosperity. According to the estimates of the National Housing Agency, confirmed by many independent sources, we shall need to build 1,250,000 to 1,500,000 houses on an average, in each of the 10 postwar years, to produce housing's share of full employment.

This bill is designed to provide the basic tools to do this job—to do it democratically—to do it with equitable regard for the interests of all the people—to do it in a way that places maximum reliance upon private enterprise—to do it without shirking the bedrock responsibility of government to do for the people what remains to be done and cannot otherwise be done.

The most important feature of this bill is not to be found in its details, but rather in its general approach. It is the first attempt to write the keynote for the spirit and method with which we must approach all of our postwar housing problems. Those problems before the war were bound up with mass unemployment, and we devised a number of specific remedies. Most of these were good and necessary measures. But in retrospect, they did not fit together into a completely logical and orderly plan for doing the whole job. They were not entirely consistent, one with the other. Therefore, we failed to do the whole job, and we never reduced mass unemployment much below 7,000,000. Housing failed to keep pace with the growth of our population, and we created a number of emergency housing measures of various sorts. Most of them were good, but they did not all fit together, and consequently they did not do the whole job. We never succeeded in resettling home building even to the 1925 level, despite a much larger population. We cleared some slums, but we never made a great inroads upon the intolerable conditions under which one-third of the nation still lives. This bill, unlike previous measures, presents the machinery for a well-rounded program to do the whole housing job—at length of course it does not complete the job overnight, but it does start it.

The bill recognizes that there are different income groups in this country, with different housing problems. It contemplates that unaided private enterprise will serve as many of these people as it can with decent housing within their means. It recognizes that the government has already been successful, through various financial plans, in helping private enterprise to serve even more people with better housing at lower costs.

Building upon this experience, the bill provides a new type of insurance, to help private enterprise still further. It provides a method of financing for clearing slums and preparing urban land for redevelopment. It extends and greatly improves the low-rent public housing program, both in the city and on the farm. It devotes special emphasis to the problems of veterans and their families, especially in connection with the disposition of permanent war housing. And it sets up a single National Housing Agency, to give unity and uniformity to whatever the government may do in the housing field. As all experience has shown, without such a unified agency, it would be ten times as hard to do one-tenth as much.

Through this bill, we can commence and then perfect a nation-wide housing program which will be comprehensive and complete—and this will be mutually acceptable to the builder, the financier, the realtor, the real estate dealer and most important of all, the American family.

This housing bill means jobs. It means bold determination to do a big job in the American way. It means reliance upon private enterprise. It means humane and sensitive government—the American kind of government.

I hope and believe this bill will become law before the new year.

There is no single action that will do more than passage of this bill to prepare us for the problems and the fruits of victory—to prepare us for a free and prosperous postwar America, based upon the ever-increasing welfare and happiness of all the people.

More Social Security—An Editorial

August 14 marks the tenth anniversary of the Social Security Act. Within the short span of a single decade, "social security" has come to mean, to millions of Americans, insurance against the loss of income in times of unemployment, old age and death; and financial assistance for the old, the young and the blind when they are in need.

It is hard, now, to recall the remarks some people made about social security back in the early 1930s. "Unconstitutional"—"unworkable," "un-American" were among the adjectives they used. But those were terms we had heard before. Similar attacks had been made against earlier social reforms which sought to provide public education, to control conditions and hours of work, to establish minimum wages and workmen's compensation.

To all these charges the answer remains the same: freedom to be hungry, or sick or illiterate are not freedoms to be cherished by a democratic people.

When the war ends, the American people will want more social security, not less. They will want the benefits of health insurance and more adequate unemployment compensation. They will want the broader coverage examined by the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill.

Members of Congress, please take note!

Three More AFL Heroes Honored By Army For Fighting Exploits

Washington, D. C.—For displaying extraordinary heroism in action under enemy fire, three more AFL men have been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Army announced.

To Private First Class Edward M. Bell, Jr., member of Automobile Chemical Products Union—AFL, Local 21130 of Camden, N. J., goes the Army's highest award for valor for his courageous action single-handedly when machine gun and rifle fire to remove demolition charges from a bridge prepared by the Germans for destruction. While attempting his assigned job, he was wounded and fell from the bridge. Through his conspicuous courage and gallantry, Private Bell enabled the task force to go forward as planned.

For fearless action against the Germans at Bastogne, Belgium, from Jan. 4 to 6, 1945, Private First Class Henry F. Ebernole, member of Lumber Workers—AFL, Local 2250, Hot Springs, Ark., has also earned the DSC. He manned a machine gun, staying at his post despite repeated attacks by enemy tanks and infantry. He was wounded while suffering from exposure to deep snow and bitter cold.

Sergt. James I. Hopper, a member of Aluminum Workers Federal Labor Union—AFL, Local 18780, was awarded for courageous action near Hollnich, Germany, on Feb. 9, 1945, when his outfit, Company "B" of the 359th Infantry Regiment was halted by machine gun attack from enemy artillery and mortar observation from a fortified house. Without hesitating, Sergeant Hopper, carrying a machine gun in his arms, boldly assaulted the house, fought the house from floor to floor as he advanced. Though his machine gun ammunition was exhausted, without stopping, Hopper drew his pistol, entered the house and forced the Germans to surrender.

News Briefs

17 AFL MEN HONORED FOR PRODUCTION IDEAS

Washington, D. C.—Seventeen AFL Metal Trades shipyard workers received honorable mentions for outstanding production ideas, the board for Individual Awards, WPB War Production Drive, announced.

At the Delta Shipbuilding Co., Inc., New Orleans, La., four workers were honored. They are: Peter G. Cajolesa, Arthur L. Dalma, W. Taney and Wilton Saxon.

Six Richmond, Calif., shipyard workers also received honorable mentions. At Kaiser Cargo, Inc., Yard No. 4, the winner was Frank Waglowcis, and five winners came from the Permanente Metals Corp.: C. G. Warden and Arthur Jacobs at Yard No. 2, and Paul Powell, Vern Smith and Myron A. Phillips at Yard No. 1. All five men won earlier prizes for ideas.

Five honorable mention awards were reported at the Kaiser Co., Inc., yards at Vancouver, Wash.: John E. Olson, C. L. Whitney, William M. Frahler, Ernest L. Ludahl and Axel Sundberg. Two Portland shipyard workers, George Olsen and J. M. Stinnett at Kaiser Co., Inc., also won honorable mentions.

WINTERIZE HOMES NOW ICKES URGES WORKERS

Washington, D. C.—Stating that the "worst fuel shortage of the war" threatens, Solid Fuels Administrator Harold L. Ickes announced that his office has requested fuel conservation directors of 25 states to launch local drives immediately to place homes and other buildings in condition to enable people to stay warm on short fuel quotas next winter. Ickes said that the program was designed to have every possible home and other building made "heat-tight" by insulation, storm doors and windows weather-stripping, caulking cracks and by other means, and to have furnaces and other heating equipment put in efficient condition to save fuel.

Much of the job must be done this summer, Ickes said. Next fall will be too late to start.

The projected drive also embraces the getting out of coal as rapidly as over coal or coke dealers can let them have this summer, the Secretary announced, and to accept alternative fuels when regular kinds are not immediately available.

SAY, LISTEN!

For the rest of this year, the AFL presents each Saturday evening at 6:45 P.M., EWT, over the nation-wide network of the American Broadcasting Company a radio news-magazine, featuring the latest news at home and abroad and special reports by trained commentators on important labor problems. This program is listed in the radio columns of your newspaper as "Labor-U.S.A." Our own subtitle for the program is "The American Federationist of the Air." Don't miss these bright, newsy broadcasts! Listen every Saturday night!

AFL PAINTER WOUNDED BY JAP BUZZ BOMB

San Francisco—Three quarters of a mile from Naha, capital city of Okinawa, Pfc. Louis Littman, member of the Painters and Decorators Union—AFL, Local 261, New York, was hit by a Japanese "buzz" bomb, while leading a platoon of infantry to assault Jap defenders of Coral Table Mountain.

They drove us off three times," Littman said in a hospital room at Letterman General Hospital here, where he was flown by ambulance plane to recover from wounds received in the battle. "We stayed the fourth trip. At last the rest of them did. I almost sailed back over the cliff when I was wounded."

MORE WORK CLOTHES TO BE READY SOON

Washington, D. C.—A temporary boost in the amount of denim and twill available for production of men's work clothing will result from the declaration of a "holiday" of about three months in procurement of this type of cotton fabric, announced by the Army Quartermaster General's WPB announced. Though the "holiday" will affect the munitions limit, it was said, it will be about six weeks before its is reflected in increased quantities of work clothing.

Army purchase of herringbone twill during the last year and a half has ranged between 250,000,000 and 13,000,000 yards a month. By special arrangement with the Army, WPB will divert all herringbone twill that would normally be purchased by QMC to manufacturers of men's work clothing and footwear.

AFL Demands Bold Program To Speed Up Reconversion

LABOR, USA

Washington, D. C.—The fifth edition of the American Federationist of the Air, broadcast on the "Labor, USA" program over the American Broadcasting Company network, presented the following outstanding feature articles to supplement the news:

Full Employment—A Postwar Must

By JOSEPH C. O'MAHONEY
U. S. Senator from Wyoming

Involuntary unemployment must not be tolerated in the postwar world if we hope to prevent another depression. When the government stops buying the products of the farm and the factory for the purposes of war we shall be face to face with another collapse unless we undertake by constructive and intelligent action to provide full employment. All business, all agriculture, all industry depends upon it. For if people cannot purchase the goods and the services the nation is capable of producing, business will go into another tailspin.

The last depression cost the business men of America $355,000,000,000 in sales. It cost farmers billions in income and corporations billions in profit. The cost of the depression was actually greater than the war debt.

The full employment bill, of which I am happy to be one of the sponsors, is not a bill to provide only industrial jobs. It is a bill to prevent a business depression.

It rests upon the firm basis of fact that the best market for the business men of America is to be found among the people at the bottom of the economic scale.

The total income of the people who in 1944 received less than $2000 a year is three times greater than the total income of everybody who received $10,000 a year or more. There were more than 32,000,000 persons receiving less than $1,000 a year and only 875,000 people more than $10,000. Obviously the 32,000,000, if they are steadily employed, can buy more food, more clothing, even more luxuries than those at the top of the economic scale. For the 32,000,000 at the bottom have a total income vastly greater than the total income of those at the top.

The economic history of the country proves that every war has been followed by a depression. The full employment bill is a bill to prevent a depression after this war.

Industry acting alone has never in the past been able to prevent depression. Government must now assume the responsibility, not by regimenting business to provide for human needs during reconversion by approving President Truman's recommendations for emergency supplementation of inadequate state unemployment compensation, by adopting legislation for higher minimum wage standards, by enacting the Full Employment Act now pending bill and by extending the nation's social security system and unified under the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill.

The council declared it will amplify its recommendations on each of the points of its program with declaration of principle which is to be drafted during the current meeting.

AFL President William Green said the council had decided to deal with the reconversion problem first because it is the key to postwar recovery. To this point the council declared:

"America is now getting too little reconversion planning preparations for resumption of peacetime production and must speed up, or be too late to avoid a major postwar depression. Unless more adequate provision is promptly made for human needs during reconversion, peace may bring economic disaster to the American people.

"This tragedy must be averted. The peace to which all Americans look forward after four years of war and sacrifice must not bear bitter fruit. The millions of American young men in uniform who have undergone the agony of modern warfare must find opportunity, not breadlines, when they return home. The millions of war workers who have labored to the point of exhaustion in a victory production drive which broke all records must not be cast off with heartless disregard of whether or not they will be able to find another job.

"America cannot afford to let these things happen because, if we do, the American way of life will be obliterated just as certainly as it would have been if Hitler had won the war. But we won the war and we can also win the peace if we act promptly and act boldly and confidently."

Mr. Green announced that the executive council had appointed Secretary-Treasurer George Meany and Vice-President William C. Doherty to serve as the AFL's fraternal delegates to the convention of the British Trades Union Congress, which will be held at Blackpool, England, next month.

Changes In Wages

By ROBERT J. WATT
AFL Representative on NWLB

Signs are multiplying that the federal government will soon adopt a new wage policy. The change is bound to be temporary because the federal government has been regulating with a firm hand the wage rates of American workers. The government has not only settled disputes over pay, but it has taken upon itself the authority to fail an certificate to grant his employer an increase in pay, even if he wanted to. The purpose of this unusual degree of government regulation was to avoid wartime inflation and thus help win the war. With that purpose organized labor agreed.

But now we are emerging from that wartime economy and entering a new, conversion economy. Instead of a shortage of labor, there will be, whenever an employer and his employes can reach agreement on wages without increasing prices to the public.

While it may be necessary during the war to maintain control over disputes, the American Federation of Labor believes that when men and management agree, collective bargaining should be given a free field. Profits of business are great enough to finance collectively bargained wage increases.

Tough times are ahead unless labor and management work together for their own salvation and the public interest.

Business will suffer as a result if economic dislocations get out of hand. The habit of governmental intervention has become strong in wartime. If the forces of labor and industry are unable to take care of their own relations in a way which will maintain a high level of employment, full production and full purchasing power, the demand will go up for governmental intervention and governmental regulation.

More Jobs For Chemical Workers

By BORIS SHISHKIN
A. F. of L. Economist

Our chemical industry has borne the brunt of the war. With all the planes, tanks, ships and guns in the world, we couldn't win without the powder and explosives turned out in vast amounts by the American chemical workers.

Now the war is about over. We will convert to war peacefully. Instead, it shifted its civilian output to war purposes. Now and after the war, it will be shifted again, this time back to civilian production. It will also expand.

To be sure, there will be some unemployment, when powder and explosive plants close down—as many of them already have. But the production of chemicals from which explosives are made is desperately needed for many products other than munitions. We have food, which will continue to be scarce everywhere for a long time.

A large-scale postwar housing program is already in the works. In addition to new construction, millions of homes will be in need of repair. Painting and repair the existing homes and buildings. This will take paint, and war has cut down the living standards of the chemical workers and assure them stable jobs. As H. A. Bradley, president of the international, puts it: "We are prepared to win a better living standard after the war for all workers in the chemical industry."

The outlook for the entire chemical industry is exceptionally bright. After temporary setbacks and unemployment, in the readjustment from war to peacetime production, there is bound to be a rapid expansion in employment and production, reaching perhaps double the present.

The International Chemical Workers' Union of the American Federation of Labor is leading the way to make sure that improved wages and working conditions will raise the living standards of the chemical workers and assure them stable jobs. As H. A. Bradley, president of the international, puts it: "We are prepared to win a better living standard after the war for all workers in the chemical industry."

AFL LONGSHOREMAN WINS HIGH ARMY DECORATION

Washington, D. C.—Five bazooka rockets, launched from the middle of a bullet-swept Manila street by Pfc. William R. Grim, 31, an AFL trucker member from St. Louis, crashed into two Japanese pillboxes last February 10 and cleared the way for the advance of Grim's platoon. Launching those rockets in full view of enemy machine gunners won for Pfc. Grim the Distinguished Service Cross, second highest decoration of the Army.

Grim, a member of the International Longshoremen's Association, Local 1645, volunteered to try to destroy the pillboxes after his platoon had been halted by concentrated machine gun and rifle fire.

LABOR PRESSMEN FLYING TO PACIFIC WAR FRONT

Washington, D. C.—At the invitation of the Army and the Navy, a small group of labor press correspondents are now flying over the Pacific on an unprecedented tour of the fighting fronts.

Representing the AFL Weekly News Service and the American Federationist, is Chris J. Story as George Richardson, secretary-treasurer of the International Firefighters Union.

The labor press representatives were asked to report the inspection trip so that they could report back directly to the workers on the problems faced by our fighting forces and the need for continued war production to keep them supplied. Mr. Richardson will report highlights of the trip in a shortwave radio broadcast over the AFL's "Labor-USA" program and will also prepare articles for publication in the AFL Weekly News Service and the American Federationist.

Executive Council Opens Session With 6-Point Plan of Action

Chicago.—The AFL Executive Council opened its summer meeting here with a ringing demand for action now to prevent a postwar depression.

The council offered the nation a challenging 6-point program to speed up reconversion and provide for human needs. This program declared:

1—The war effort must be scaled down promptly to a one-front basis, but with enough of the military activities with more than ample support for carrying on the war against Japan to a quick and victorious conclusion, but would permit release of surplus men, materials and facilities for an accelerated reconversion drive.

2—A new peace production program must be launched with vigor and dispatch on a scale large enough to meet the nation's needs but without interference to the war effort.

3—Wartime government controls over labor and industry must be dropped as rapidly as the war situation permits and an effort made to substitute voluntary, cooperative methods for government directives.

4—Every reasonable encouragement should be extended by the government to industry to speedily expand postwar production and provide full employment.

5—The present alarming shrinkage of the purchasing power of the nation's workers must be halted by the restoration of collective bargaining between labor and management.

6—Congress must act immediately after it returns from its summer recess to provide for human needs during reconversion by approving President Truman's recommendations for emergency supplementation of inadequate state unemployment compensation, by adopting legislation for higher minimum wage standards, by enacting the Full Employment Act now pending bill and by extending the nation's social security system and unified under the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill.

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